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AUTHOR	Perkins, Lawrence H.
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ABSTRACT

The report evaluated performance, qualifications, training, and acceptance of occupational specialists (O.S.) in Florida public school districts. Data were provided by 64 school district superintendents, 78 principals of schools employing an O.S., 281 occupational specialists (employed in more than 95 percent of school districts), 548 students, and 117 teachers. Findings indicated that more than 50 percent of O.S. were performing in their jobs as specified by State Board of Education requirements, although some reported additional duties. More than 62 percent of school districts had O.S. training programs, and respondents felt that the O.S. had adequate training, made a worthy contribution to the student body, had a relatively positive acceptance by school staffs, and had qualifications generally exceeding minimum regulations. Recommendations aimed at strengthening the role of the O.S. are listed, and a major portion of the report is devoted to tables and graphs presenting the survey questions, the responses, and providing both raw data and percentages. (MDW)

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Final Report

August 1974

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An Evaluation of the Status of The Occupational Specialist in Florida

The University of West Florida
Pensacola, Florida

by
Lawrence H. Perkins

The project reported herein was conducted for the Florida State Advisory Council on Vocational Education pursuant to a grant administered by the Division of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education, Florida State Department of Education. Contractors undertaking such projects are encouraged to express freely their professional judgments in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent the official position or policy of the Florida Department of Education.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA 32504
(904) 476-9500

FACULTY OF VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL-BUSINESS EDUCATION

October 10, 1974

Dr. John A. Beaumont, Chairman
Florida State Advisory Council on
Vocational and Technical Education
5219 - 13th. Ave Drive, W.
Bradenton, Florida 33505

Dear Dr. Beaumont:

This document is submitted as a process evaluation report of the Occupational Specialist Program in Florida. The purposes of the study were to formulate answers to questions relative to the performance of the Occupational Specialist as stipulated in the State Board of Education Regulations.

Findings of this study indicate that the Occupational Specialist has made a worthy contribution to the student body and the position should be continued. Many students in our public schools terminating their formal education on or before high school graduation will probably benefit from the services of the Occupational Specialist. Fortunately, we now have a public school staff member designated as exclusively responsible for assisting youth in making the transition from school to the world of work.

It has been a professional honor and pleasure for our faculty to conduct this evaluation for the Florida State Advisory Council on Vocational Education. We look forward to future activities for providing vocational education services to residents of Florida.

Sincerely,

Lawrence H. Perkins

Lawrence H. Perkins
Chairman

LHP/jhs

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The purposes of the study were to formulate answers to the following questions:

A. Has the Occupational Specialist:
   (1) Performed his job adequately as prescribed by State Board Regulations?
   (2) Made a worthy contribution to the student body?
   (3) Been adequately trained to perform his job?
   (4) Been accepted as a functioning member by other school staff?
B. Should the Occupational Specialist Program be continued?
C. Are qualifications of the Occupational Specialist adequate?

Data utilized for the study were provided by 64 school district superintendents, 78 principals of schools where O. S. were employed, 281 Occupational Specialists (O.S.), 548 students, 175 counselors and 117 teachers.

The findings of the study are summarized in the following statements.

Sixty-three (63) of 67 Florida School Districts had approved O.S. Programs in December 1973 with one additional program planned to begin in 1974, which would bring the total to 64, representing 95.5% of the districts. Three districts did not have O.S. Programs.

The O.S. Program has been successful A majority (more than 50%) of the O.S. have, generally, performed the job task as specified in the State Board of Education Regulations. Some of the O.S. performed duties not mentioned in State Board of Education Regulations, such as regular and substitute teaching and clerical work.

The O.S. have made a worthy contribution to the student body.

Forty-two superintendents representing 62.6% of Florida school districts report functioning approved O.S. Training Programs. In like manner 62.6% of the superintendents felt that the O.S. were adequately trained. Supporting data from principals, teachers, and counselors further indicate the O.S., as a group, were adequately trained to perform the job.

The O.S. have become functioning members of the school staff. The degree of acceptance by the school staff was relatively positive.

The school superintendents, principals, counselors and teachers strongly favor continuing the program.

Qualifications of the O.S. far exceed minimum State Board of Education Regulations relative to age, work experience and educational experience.

Recommendations

On the basis of the data presented and the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested to state and district school administrators for implementation:

A. Since students, teachers and administrators indicated that the O.S. made a worthy contribution to the student body, it is recommended that the program be continued.

B. Some of the O.S. reported performing tasks which were not included in State Board of Education Regulations such as full time teaching, substitute teaching, clerical work and running errands for the administrator. Therefore, it is recommended that the State Board of Education Regulations be revised to discourage the O.S. from being assigned tasks which are not directly required in the process of counseling students into jobs.

C. Approximately one-third of the O.S. were provided private offices with private telephones and two-thirds of the O.S. shared or received no private office facilities. Therefore, it is recommended that each O.S. be provided a private office and supplies plus a private telephone to allow communication with business, industry, and other organizations outside of the school.

D. It is recommended that the supervisor of the O.S. program in each school district analyze the results of the O.S. as compared to the State Board of Education Regulations and make refinements to produce the desired outcomes. Data reported for this study indicated that a majority, more than 50%, of the O.S. performed a majority of the tasks included in the State Board of Education Regulations. However, this did not provide a description of the total program services in each school district by the guidance staff and the O.S. team.

E. Superintendents of 42 school districts reported functioning inservice training programs for the O.S. In a like manner 42 superintendents felt that the O.S., as a group, was adequately trained to perform the job. It is recommended that the remaining 22 school districts with O.S. Programs develop a comprehensive training program for their O.S. This could be a joint effort by two or more counties and existing training programs should be analyzed, adopted and used if possible.

F. Many of the O.S. have been in their positions and away from the working world since 1972 when school districts first began implementing the program. There is a chance that they may have lost contact with the changes which

have occurred since they left the payroll job. In order to justify their existance in the public schools the O.S. must maintain current working world knowledge. Unless this happens the O.S. has no contribution for the public school and should be eliminated. Therefore, it is recommended that the inservice training programs include provisions for the O.S. to stay up to date with the changes in the working world as they occur. Close relations and contact with vocational craft advisory committees could provide the O.S. with many of the changes.

G. Since the students indicate that the parent is more helpful in job decisions than the counselor, O.S. and teacher combined, it is recommended that the schools' career counseling team hold career education seminar sessions for the parent and student to attend together. Logically, this seminar should be conducted during the non-working hours to allow parents to attend.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE STATUS OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Public school youth and adults are in drastic need of vocational and career guidance. Selecting a realistic career, locating and entering a training program and earning an entry level job in the chosen career field is a major transitional task for all youth and adults. Counselors in the public schools would logically assume the responsibility of providing career guidance to the students. However, responsibilities such as assisting students in selecting academic studies and solving personal problems, along with the necessity of additional "world of work" knowledge qualifications, prevent counselors from providing career guidance services to the majority of the student body in our public schools.

In 1970 Florida Legislators felt that students were not receiving adequate assistance in the process of choosing, qualifying for and entering appropriate jobs and careers. Thus, they passed a law and provided funds to assist school boards to employ additional staff, designated as the Occupational Specialist (O.S.) to assist students in selecting, preparing for and entering realistic jobs and careers.

While academic counselors were required to complete a masters degree for Florida Certification, the O.S. was required to complete two years work experience in a socially desirable payroll job for certification. The intent of the law was to provide the public schools with staff members who were knowledgable of the realities of the world of work and could interpret the needs to students and staff and bring the schools closer to assisting youth in the transition from school to realistic jobs and careers.

District school boards have implemented Occupational Specialist Programs, employed persons in the positions, conducted pre-service and in-service training programs and are offering service to students.

The Problem:

While local school administrators are knowledgable of the success of the Occupational Specialist in their district, there has been no concentrated effort to assemble data from all 67 Florida School Districts relative to the success of the O.S. Program.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study was to identify the performance status of the Occupational Specialists in the school districts across the State. More specifically, the purpose of the study was to formulate answers to the following questions which were used as guides for conducting the study:

A. Has the Occupational Specialists:
   (1) performed his job adequately as prescribed by State Board of Education Regulations?
   (2) made a worthy contribution to the student body?
   (3) been adequately trained to perform his job?
   (4) been accepted as a functioning member by other school staff?
B. Should the Occupational Specialist program be continued?
C. Are the qualifications of the Occupational Specialist adequate?

PROCEDURE

The conduct of the study was performed in the following sequence:

1. An analysis the O.S. responsibilities was constructed from the State Board of Education Regulations.

2. Information forms were constructed from the analysis for collecting information from school superintendents, principals, teachers, counselors, O.S. and students relative to the purposes of the study. Selected school staff from Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties were asked to review the information forms and make suggestions which would provide clear communications and reliable data collection. Only a small number of changes were recommended and these were included in final version of the instrument.

3. Superintendents were requested, by registered mail, to provide names and mailing addresses of principals, counselors, and O.S. in their school district and to complete the information form relative to the performance of the O.S.

4. Information forms were sent to O.S., counselors, and principals requesting completion and return.

5. A random sample of teachers was drawn from schools where O.S. were assigned and requested to provide information for the study.

TABLE 1-1

RETURN RATE OF MAILED INFORMATION FORMS

GROUP	NUMBER OF MAILED FORMS	TOTAL NUMBER RETURNED	PERCENTAGE RETURNED	USABLE DATA
Superintendents	67	64	95.5%	64
Principals	312	150	48.1%	78
Occupational Specialists	355	281	79.2%	281
Counselors	303	216	71.3%	175
Teachers	366	155	42.3%	117
TOTALS	1,403	826	58.9%	715

6. The University of West Florida research staff conducted personal interviews with selected principals, teachers, counselors and O.S. to verify the validity of the data which was collected by mail with the information forms. The interviews were conducted in Hillsborough, Holmes, Leon and Washington Counties representing urban, surburban and rural areas.

7. The University research staff collected information from 548 students by randomly selecting classes in schools where personal interviews were conducted with school staff.

8. The University research team tabulated the data and performed pertinent statistical treatment for analysis purposes.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Data collected for the study was relative to the process of the O.S. performing his job (e.g., the task he performed in serving the students, number of field trips, sessions with craft advisory groups, information centers established and others). These process type tasks must be performed if students are to be served. Conversely, if these tasks are performed it does not necessarily guarantee services to the student which are acceptable and effective. The optimum goal of the O.S. program is to assist student into jobs which are realistic and meaningful. In order to measure the effectiveness of the O.S. program, at some point in later life after the student leaves the school and has experienced the transition into the world of work he must answer questions similar to the following:

Was the guidance information from the O.S. valid?
Were the jobs recommended by the O.S. realistic and meaningful?
How well satisfied was the student with the assistance he received in identifying, preparing for, entering and adjusting in the world of work?
How did the students prosper in the working world as compared to those who did not receive assistance from the O.S.?

ASSUMPTIONS

For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that school district superintendents, school principals, counselors, teachers, students and O.S. are reliable sources of information.

SECTION II. PERFORMANCE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST

Purposes of the study were to ascertain answers to the questions (1) has the Occupational Specialist (O.S.) performed his job adequately as prescribed by State Board of Education Regulations?, (2) has the O.S. made a worthy contribution to the student body? and (3) should the O.S. Program be continued? The purpose of this section is to report the data relative to answers to these questions.

The job description which was used as a guide for school districts to employ and use the O.S. is included in the following State Board of Education Regulations:

6A-6.72 Occupational Specialist

(3) An occupational specialist, under the supervision of a certified counselor, may be responsible, individually or as a member of a counseling team, for specialized assignments. These may include, but are not limited to the following:

(a) Identification of potential or actual school drop-outs.
(b) Intensive counseling with potential or actual school drop-outs and their parents or families.
(c) Counseling students, teachers, and school administrators concerning available job opportunities and requirements.
(d) Assisting with the planning and implementation of the vocational testing program.
(e) Assisting in evaluation of the career guidance services provided by the school board.
(f) Assisting in identifying and securing job placements for persons completing or leaving direct job-related preparatory training programs and seeking employment.
(g) Assisting in two-year follow-up studies of persons completing or leaving direct job-related preparatory training programs.
(h) Assisting in determining the adequacy of job adjustment over a two-year [sic-period] for persons employed after completing or leaving direct job-related preparatory training programs.
(i) Compiling and disseminating information on employment opportunities at the local, state, and national levels.
(j) Securing and making available prepared materials concerning employment opportunities and requirements to student, parents, teachers, administrators, and out-of-school youth and adults.

(k) Preparing information on local and state job requirements and opportunities in cooperation with local vocational education instructors and public agencies concerned with employment.
(l) Assisting in the orientation of persons to job-related preparatory training.

Usable data relative to performance of the O.S. were provided by 64 school district superintendents, 281 O.S., 548 students, 78 principals of schools where O.S. were employed, 175 counselors and 117 teachers. Information forms from 41 counselors in schools where O.S. were not employed were tabulated separately. An observation of the response indicated ignorance of the O.S. as all of these counselors responded "not pertinent" to items relative to the duties and performance of the O.S. Also, information forms from 72 principals who did not utilize O.S. in their schools were tabulated separately. The data revealed complete ignorance of the O.S. by these principals since a large majority responded to the items with "non applicable" or "don't know." Data from both of these uninformed sources were not used in this report. The usable data were tabulated and are included in Figures 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4. An analysis of the reported data indicate that:

-- Sixty-two (62) of 67 school districts in Florida had O.S. Programs in operation in 1973 with one additional program planned to begin in 1974 which would bring the total to 63 representing 94.4% of the districts. (Further investigation revealed that 64 of 67 school districts in Florida had approved O.S. programs in December 1973. Three districts did not have O.S. programs.)

-- In schools where they were employed, a majority (more than 50%) of the O.S. performed the following tasks:

(1) counseled students toward careers and jobs.
(2) established vocational information centers for providing job information to students and staff. However, the O.S. reported that these centers were used by less than 30% of the students and staff.
(3) provided information about jobs to students and school staff in meetings and counseling sessions.
(4) conducted field trips for students to visit business and industry.
(5) performed or are planning to perform 2 year follow-up studies of students previously in vocational education programs.
(6) informed school staff of immediate manpower needs of business and industry.
(7) involved business and industrial personnel in vocational schools and programs.
(8) met with career related student organizations.

(9) met or plan to meet with craft advisory boards.
(10) informed or plan to inform craft advisory boards of the school guidance program.

Further analysis of the data indicate that 52% of the O.S. reported a vocational testing program for students in their schools and the O.S. is assuming responsibilities in the testing program.

When asked "should the O.S. program be continued?" 86.6% of the superintendents, 83% of the principals, 79% of the counselors and 66% of the teachers responses were positive.

The most frequently mentioned dislikes of the O.S. program by the superintendents was "there are just not enough O.S. to serve the needs of the students."

The O.S. indicated that they did perform some activities which were not included in the State Board of Education Regulations. Those most frequently mentioned were (1) substitute teaching by 18% of the O.S., (2) regular teaching by 4% of the O.S., (3) running errands for school administrators by 17% of the O.S., and (4) clerical duties by 50% of the O.S.

An analysis of the tasks performed by a majority of the O.S. would indicate that the program has been successful (see Figure 2-2). Data indicate that the O.S. have, generally, performed the job tasks as specified in the State Board of Education Regulations and therefore, made a worthy contribution to the student body. The students seem to favor the O.S., 44% could name the O.S. correctly, 50% of the students responded that the O.S. taught about jobs while 30% of the students said that the O.S. helped them meet people outside of school who were knowledgable about jobs of interest to them (see Figure 2-3). The school superintendent, administrative staff, counselors and teachers strongly favor continuing the program.

While the parent was identified by junior and senior high school students as the one person most helpful with plans for a job the O.S. was identified by vocational-technical students as most helpful. When the results for all 548 students were tabulated the parent received more votes than the counselor, O.S. and teacher combined (see Figure 2-3).

FIGURE 2-1

RESPONSE FROM SUPERINTENDENTS RELATIVE TO PERFORMANCE

OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST

N = 67

- Does your county have an O.S. Program?

Yes = 62 (92.5%) No = 2 (3.0%)

- Describe the role of the O.S.

Activities mentioned most frequent:

Career counseling	49 (73.1%)
Provides literature on jobs	39 (58.2%)
Job Placement	31 (46.3%)
Follow up	21 (31.3%)
Councils potential dropouts	15 (22.4%)

- When did the O.S. Program begin in your county?

1970	1 (1.4%)
1971	20 (29.9%)
1972	31 (46.3%)
1973	10 (14.9%)
To begin in 1974	1 (1.5%)
No response	4 (6.0%)

- What do you like most about the O.S. Program?

Activities most mentioned:

Counseling students on jobs	39 (58.2%)
Counseling potential dropouts	11 (16.4%)
Helps students	4 (6.0%)
Helps students with personal problems	3 (4.5%)
Performs follow up	3 (4.5%)
Job Placement	3 (4.5%)
Maintains literature on jobs	3 (4.5%)

- What do you dislike most about the O.S. Program?

No dislikes	15 (22.4%)
Not enough O.S.	13 (19.4%)
Funding inadequacy	9 (13.4%)

- Should the O.S. Program be continued?

Yes	58 (86.6%)
No	3 (4.5%)
Undecided	2 (3.0%)
No response	4 (6.0%)

FIGURE 2-2

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
Has the O.S.:				
1. Counseled students relative to:				
a. Graduation requirements? Yes	21 (26.9%)	40 (22.9%)	33 (28.2%)	94 (25.4%)
b. Academic problems? Yes	33 (42.3%)	47 (26.9%)	43 (36.8%)	123 (33.2%)
c. Personal problems? Yes	39 (50.0%)	63 (36.0%)	43 (36.8%)	145 (39.2%)
2. Taught as a substitute? Yes	1 (1.2%)	10 (5.7%)	3 (2.6%)	14 (3.8%)
3. Run errands for administrators? Yes	4 (5.1%)	17 (9.7%)	14 (12.0%)	35 (9.5%)
4. Taught units in careers? Yes	47 (60.3%)	89 (50.9%)	49 (41.9%)	185 (50.0%)
5. Oriented students to job training?				
Yes	63 (80.8%)	128 (73.1%)	69 (59.0%)	260 (70.3%)
No	6 (7.7%)	25 (14.3%)	8 (6.8%)	39 (10.5%)
Don't know	3 (3.8%)	17 (9.7%)	39 (33.3%)	59 (16.0%)
No response	6 (7.7%)	5 (2.9%)	1 (0.9%)	12 (3.2%)
6. Met with career related youth organizations?				
Yes	40 (51.3%)	58 (33.1%)	31 (26.5%)	129 (34.9%)
No	24 (30.8%)	61 (34.9%)	40 (34.2%)	125 (33.8%)
Don't know	7 (9.0%)	51 (29.1%)	38 (32.5%)	96 (26.0%)
No response	7 (9.0%)	5 (2.9%)	8 (6.8%)	20 (5.4%)

FIGURE 2-2 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
7. Attended meeting conducted for craft advisory boards?				
Yes	25 (32.1%)	40 (22.9%)	25 (21.4%)	90(24.3%)
No	16 (20.5%)	44 (25.1%)	12 (10.3%)	72(19.5%)
Don't know	31 (39.7%)	87 (49.7%)	77 (65.8%)	195(52.7%)
No response	6 (7.7%)	4 (2.3%)	3 (2.6%)	13(3.5%)
8. Informed school staff of manpower needs?				
Yes	41 (52.6%)	79 (45.1%)	43 (36.8%)	163(44.1%)
No	22 (28.2%)	59 (33.7%)	48 (41.0%)	129(34.9%)
Don't know	9 (11.5%)	32 (18.3%)	21 (18.0%)	62(16.8%)
No response	6 (7.7%)	5 (2.9%)	5 (4.3%)	16(4.3%)
9. Informed craft advisory boards of school guidance program?				
Yes	19 (24.4%)	29 (16.6%)	22 (18.8%)	70(18.9%)
No	17 (21.8%)	39 (22.3%)	12 (10.3%)	68(18.4%)
Don't know	37 (47.4%)	100 (57.1%)	79 (67.5%)	216(58.4%)
No response	5 (6.4%)	7 (4.0%)	4 (3.4%)	16(4.3%)

FIGURE 2-2 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
10. Involved business and industrial personnel in Vocational Programs?				
Yes	63 (80.8%)	138 (78.9%)	66 (56.4%)	267(72.2%)
No	7 (9.0%)	16 (9.14%)	8 (6.8%)	31(8.4%)
Don't know	4 (5.1%)	17 (9.7%)	38 (32.5%)	59(16.0%)
No response	4 (5.1%)	4 (2.3%)	5 (4.3%)	13(3.5%)
11. Taken students on field trips?				
Weekly	9 (11.5%)	12 (6.9%)	14 (12.0%)	35(9.5%)
Monthly	16 (20.5%)	28 (16.0%)	20 (17.1%)	64(17.3%)
Rarely	28 (35.9%)	56 (32.0%)	18 (15.4%)	102(27.6%)
Never	13 (16.7%)	32 (18.3%)	16 (13.7%)	61(16.5%)
Don't know	8 (10.3%)	30 (17.1%)	40 (34.2%)	78(21.1%)
No response	4 (5.1%)	17 (9.7%)	9 (7.7%)	30(8.1%)
12. How often do you refer students to the O.S. for career information?				
Regularly	26 (33.3%)	60 (34.3%)	15 (12.8%)	101(27.3%)
Frequently	24 (30.8%)	77 (44.0%)	26 (22.2%)	127(34.3%)
Rarely	15 (19.2%)	29 (16.6%)	32 (27.4%)	76(20.5%)
Never	9 (11.5%)	7 (4.0%)	37 (31.6%)	53(14.3%)
No response	4 (5.1%)	2 (1.1%)	7 (6.0%)	13(3.5%)

FIGURE 2-2 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
13. Some people we have talked with have stated that the guidelines for the role of the O.S. are clear while others say that the guidelines are unclear? How do you feel?				
Clear	35 (44.9%)	63 (36.0%)	27 (23.1%)	125(33.8%)
Unclear; vague	25 (32.1%)	72 (41.1%)	41 (35.0%)	138(37.3%)
Undecided	8 (10.3%)	12 (6.9%)	8 (6.8%)	28(7.8%)
I don't know; no basis for information	9 (11.5%)	25 (14.3%)	37 (31.6%)	71(19.2%)
No response	1 (1.3%)	3 (1.7%)	4 (3.4%)	6(1.6%)
14. Has the O.S. created a vocational information center?				
Yes, it is in operation	53 (68.0%)	116 (66.3%)	76 (65.0%)	245(66.2%)
No, none is planned	5 (6.4%)	24 (13.7%)	16 (13.7%)	45(12.2%)
No, but a center is planned	12 (15.4%)	24 (13.7%)	8 (6.8%)	44(11.9%)
No response	8 (10.3%)	11 (6.3%)	17 (14.5%)	36(9.7%)

FIGURE 2-2 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
15. How many hours a day is the vocational information center open?				
1-2 hours	3 (3.9%)	NA	NA	NA
3-4 hours	2 (2.6%)	NA	NA	NA
5-6 hours	19 (24.4%)	NA	NA	NA
7-8 hours	24 (30.8%)	NA	NA	NA
More than 8 hours	8 (10.3%)	NA	NA	NA
Don't know, No response and Not applicable	22 (28.2%)	NA	NA	NA
16. One responsibility of the O.S. is to provide students with information about training programs which would fit them to socially desirable jobs that pay a living wage and provide opportunity for advancement. In your opinion, does the school's O.S.(s) perform well in matching the particular student with an appropriate job-opportunity?				
Yes	47 (60.3%)	96 (54.9%)	49 (41.9%)	192(51.9%)
No	9 (11.5%)	19 (10.9%)	15 (12.8%)	43(11.6%)

FIGURE 2-2 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
16. (Continued) I don't know	16 (20.5%)	55 (31.4%)	49 (41.9%)	120(32.4%)
No response	6 (7.7%)	5 (2.9%)	4 (3.4%)	15 (4.1%)
17. Has the O.S. helped students with homework? Yes	7 (9.0%)	14 (8.0%)	15 (12.8%)	36(9.7%)
No	48 (61.5%)	114 (65.1%)	39 (33.3%)	201(54.3%)
Don't know	23 (29.5%)	46 (26.3%)	58 (49.6%)	127(34.3%)
No response	0 (0%)	1 (0.6%)	5 (4.3%)	6(1.6%)
18. In your opinion, should the O.S. Program be continued? Yes	65 (83.3%)	138 (78.9%)	77 (65.8%)	280(75.7%)
No	3 (3.9%)	16 (9.1%)	14 (12.0%)	33(8.9%)
Undecided and no response	10 (12.8%)	21 (12.0%)	26 (22.2%)	57(15.4%)

FIGURE 2-3

RESPONSE FROM STUDENTS RELATIVE TO

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	STUDENTS			
	JR. HI.	HI-SCHOOL	VO-TECH	TOTAL
	N=211	N=234	N=103	N=548
1. Do you know your O.S.? Yes	127(60.2%)	109(46.6%)	69(67.0%)	305(55.7%)
No	84(40.0%)	125(53.4%)	34(33.0%)	243(44.3%)
Name the O. S. correctly	108(51.2%)	80(34.2%)	52(50.5%)	240(43.8%)
2. Did the O.S. teach classes like teachers? Never	20(9.5%)	53(22.7%)	26(25.2%)	99(18.1%)
Rarely (once a month)	16(7.6%)	20(8.6%)	5(4.9%)	41(7.5%)
Frequently (once a week)	12(5.7%)	3(1.3%)	4(3.9%)	19(3.5%)
Regularly (every day)	17(8.1%)	4(1.7%)	9(8.7%)	32(5.8%)
I don't know	146(69.2%)	154(65.8%)	59(57.3%)	357(65.2%)
3. Who helped you most with plans for a job? O. S.	38(18.0%)	43(18.4%)	33(32.0%)	114(20.8%)
Teacher	16(7.6%)	15(6.4%)	31(30.1%)	62(11.3%)
Counselor	23(10.9%)	31(13.3%)	11(10.7%)	65(11.9%)
Parents	98(46.5%)	124(53.0%)	15(14.6%)	237(43.3%)
Assistant Principal	21(10.0%)	1(0.4%)	1(0.9%)	23(4.2%)
Principal	1(0.5%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(0.2%)
Other (please specify)	14(6.6%)	20(8.6%)	12(11.7%)	46(8.4%)

FIGURE 2-3 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM STUDENTS RELATIVE TO

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	STUDENTS			
	JR. HI.	HI-SCHOOL	VO-TECH	TOTAL
	N=211	N=234	N=103	N=548
4. Did the O.S. teach about jobs?				
Yes	121(57.4%)	98(41.9%)	53(51.5%)	272(49.6%)
No	7(3.3%)	18(7.7%)	12(11.7%)	37(6.8%)
I don't know	83(39.3%)	118(50.4%)	38(36.9%)	239(43.6%)
5. Did the O.S. take students on field trips?				
Yes	85(40.3%)	60(25.6%)	24(23.3%)	169(30.8%)
No	14(6.6%)	34(14.5%)	27(26.2%)	75(13.7%)
I don't know	112(53.1%)	140(59.8%)	52(50.5%)	304(55.5%)
6. Did you belong to a club with activities with a possible job interest to you?				
Yes	19(9.0%)	35(15.0%)	22(21.4%)	76(13.9%)
No	192(91.0%)	199(85.0%)	81(78.6%)	472(86.1%)
7. Did the O.S. attend any of these club meetings?				
Yes	4(1.9%)	11(4.7%)	10(9.7%)	25(4.6%)
No	207(98.1%)	223(95.3%)	93(90.3%)	523(95.4%)
8. Did the O.S. meet with your parents?				
Yes	21(10.0%)	18(7.7%)	22(21.4%)	61(11.1%)
No	190(90.1%)	216(92.3%)	81(78.6%)	487(88.9%)
9. Did the O.S. help you meet people outside of school who know about jobs that interest you?				
Yes	54(25.6%)	72(30.8%)	50(48.5%)	176(32.1%)

FIGURE 2-3 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM STUDENTS RELATIVE TO

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	STUDENTS			
	JR. HI.	HI-SCHOOL	VO-TECH	TOTAL
	N=211	N=234	N=103	N=548
9. (Continued)				
No	45(21.3%)	41(17.5%)	12(11.7%)	98(17.9%)
I don't know	112(53.1%)	121(51.7%)	41(39.8%)	274(50.0%)
10. Was the O.S. helpful to you in deciding on a job?				
Yes	64(30.3%)	71(30.3%)	44(42.7%)	179(32.7%)
No	71(33.7%)	75(32.1%)	20(19.4%)	166(30.3%)
I don't know	76(36.0%)	88(37.6%)	39(37.9%)	203(37.0%)
11. Do you think you will be able to find a job when you graduate from high school?				
Yes	173(82.0%)	195(83.3%)	81(78.6%)	449(81.9%)
No	7(3.3%)	8(3.4%)	7(6.8%)	22(4.0%)
I don't know	31(14.7%)	31(13.3%)	15(14.6%)	77(14.0%)

FIGURE 2-4

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
1. How many field trips were available to students last year?		
1-3	59	(21.0%)
4-6	34	(12.1%)
7-10	31	(11.0%)
11 or more	62	(22.1%)
None	81	(28.8%)
No response	14	(5.0%)
2. Which of the following activities do you perform?		
Counseling (other than career)	205	(73.0%)
Substitute teaching	51	(18.2%)
Regular teaching	11	(3.9%)
Running errands for administrators	48	(17.1%)
Teaching classes on careers	160	(56.9%)
Clerical duties	140	(49.8%)
3. Have you performed 2 year follow up studies?		
The process has begun	90	(32.0%)
Plan to immediately	20	(7.1%)
Will begin when program is underway	87	(31.0%)
Don't intend to	51	(18.2%)
No response	33	(11.7%)
4. Have you involved business and industrial personnel in the vocational program?		
Yes, the process has begun	223	(79.4%)
No, but I plan to	42	(15.0%)

FIGURE 2-4 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
4. (Continued) No, I don't plan to	5	(1.8%)
No response	11	(3.9%)
5. Do you meet with career related student organizations? Yes	150	(53.4%)
No, but I plan to	66	(23.5%)
No, I don't plan to	39	(13.9%)
No response	26	(9.3%)
6. Have you attended meetings conducted for craft advisory boards? Yes, the process has begun	107	(38.1%)
No, but I plan to	98	(34.9%)
No, I don't plan to	45	(16.0%)
No response	31	(11.0%)
7. Have you informed craft advisory boards of school guidance programs? Yes, the process has begun	101	(35.9%)
No, but I plan to	93	(33.1%)
No, I don't plan to	39	(13.9%)
No response	48	(17.1%)
8. Is there a vocational testing program in your school(s)? Yes, for all students	62	(22.1%)
Yes, for referred students	31	(11.0%)
Yes, for students requesting help	53	(18.9%)
No	76	(27.1%)
No response	59	(21.0%)

FIGURE 2-4 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
9. Who is primarily responsible for the vocational testing program?		
Occupational Specialist	68	(24.2%)
Counselor	70	(24.9%)
Assistant Principal	3	(1.0%)
Occupational Specialist & Counselor	51	(18.2%)
Voc Tech Center	6	(2.1%)
Teacher	2	(0.7%)
Military Personnel	3	(1.0%)
Other	8	(2.9%)
Not Applicable	48	(17.1%)
No response	22	(7.8%)
10. Has a Vocational Information Center been established?		
Yes, it is in operation	172	(61.2%)
No, but one is planned	60	(21.4%)
No, none is planned	28	(10.0%)
No response	21	(7.5%)
11. Who uses the vocational information center (check as many as necessary)?		
Students	18	(6.4%)
Teachers	0	(0.0%)
Counselors	0	(0.0%)
Administrators	0	(0.0%)
Students & Teachers	21	(7.5%)
Teachers & Counselors	0	(0.0%)

FIGURE 2-4 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
11. (Continued) Students, Teachers & Counselors	80	(28.5%)
Students, Teachers, Counselors & Administrators	76	(27.1%)
Other	6	(2.2%)
No Response	80	(28.5%)
12. How many hours a day is the vocational information center open? 1-2 hours	3	(1.1%)
3-4 hours	8	(2.9%)
5-6 hours	51	(18.2%)
7-8 hours	104	(37.0%)
More than 8 hours	28	(10.0%)
No Response	87	(31.0%)
13. How often do you schedule group conferences with students to distribute occupational information? Once a day	36	(12.8%)
Once a week	25	(8.9%)
Twice a week	28	(10.0%)
Less than once a week	42	(15.0%)
Never	19	(6.8%)
More than once a day	5	(1.8%)
As needed	10	(3.6%)
When requested	17	(6.1%)
Often as Possible	10	(3.6%)
Daily Bulletins & Accouncements	7	(2.5%)

FIGURE 2-4 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
13. (Continued)		
Anytime students come in	5	(1.8%)
Varies	6	(2.1%)
No Group Facilities	3	(1.1%)
Other	9	(3.2%)
No Response	59	(21.0%)
14. How often do you schedule conferences with the school staff to distribute occupational information?		
Once a week	26	(9.3%)
Once a month	29	(10.3%)
Once a semester	15	(5.3%)
Never	54	(19.2%)
As needed	38	(13.5%)
One to one basis	19	(6.8%)
Faculty or Staff Meetings	7	(2.5%)
Bulletins Distributed	5	(1.8%)
When information is available	7	(2.5%)
When necessary	6	(2.1%)
Varies	8	(2.9%)
Other	6	(2.1%)
Not applicable	3	(1.1%)
No response	58	(20.6%)

FIGURE 2-4 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO PERFORMANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
15. How often do you schedule conferences or have phone conversations with parents to distribute occupational information?		
Once a week	17	(6.1%)
Once a month	19	(6.8%)
Once a semester	11	(3.9%)
Never	45	(16.0%)
When possible	6	(2.1%)
Upon request of parents	35	(12.5%)
As needed	43	(15.3%)
Next year	10	(3.6%)
Daily visits	12	(4.3%)
Not applicable	1	(0.3%)
Not enough time	4	(1.4%)
Weekly Newscolumn	1	(0.3%)
Twice a Year (Parent's Night)	1	(0.3%)
Other	9	(3.2%)
No response	67	(23.8%)

SECTION III. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST

A portion of the study was conducted to ascertain answers to the questions (1) are qualifications of the Occupational Specialist (O.S.) adequate? and (2) has the O.S. been adequately trained to perform his job? The purpose of this section is to report the opinions of superintendents, principals, teachers, counselors and O.S. to formulate answers to the questions.

The State Board of Education Regulations specify that the O.S. shall be selected on the basis of criteria such as (1) maturity, experience and demonstrated ability to relate and to communicate with young people, (2) at least 20 years of age and (3) completion of at least two years or the equivalent of fulltime gainful work experience.

The data reported by 281 O.S. reveal that all O.S. were 22 years or older, the mean age calculated at 33.75 years and oldest of the group reported at 65 years.

Data reported on the O.S. relative to Florida teacher certification reveal that 78% hold a Rank III Certificate, 15% hold a provisional certificate and 3% hold a Rank II Certificate.

Data reported on O.S. work experience with business, industry or government in a payroll job revealed that 1% of the O.S. had less than two years, 39% had experienced 2 to 9 years and 59% had more than 9 years. Work experience by the O.S. in the field of education included 13% with less than 2 years, 71% with 2 to 9 years and 13% with more than 9 years experience.

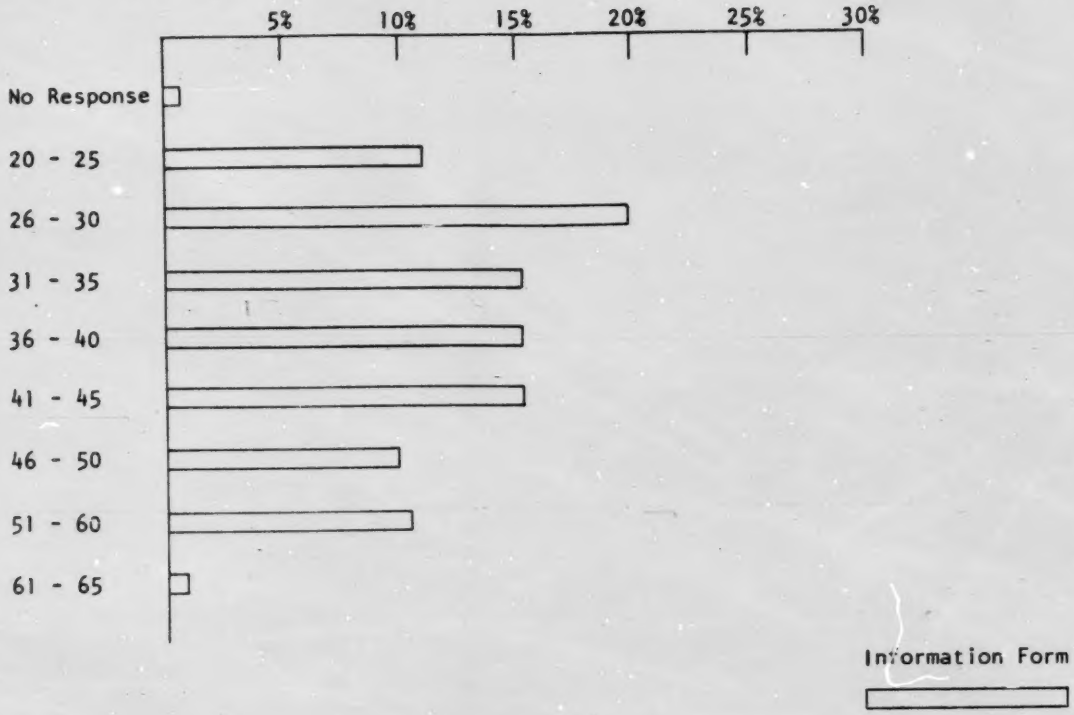
Achievements in education by the O.S. include 23% completed only high school, 19% completed 2 years of college, 31% completed 4 years of college and 3% completed a Master's Degree. Twenty-six percent of the O.S. did not identify their educational achievements.

An observation of the information indicate that qualifications of the O.S. far exceed minimum State Board of Education Regulations relative to age, work experience and educational achievements.

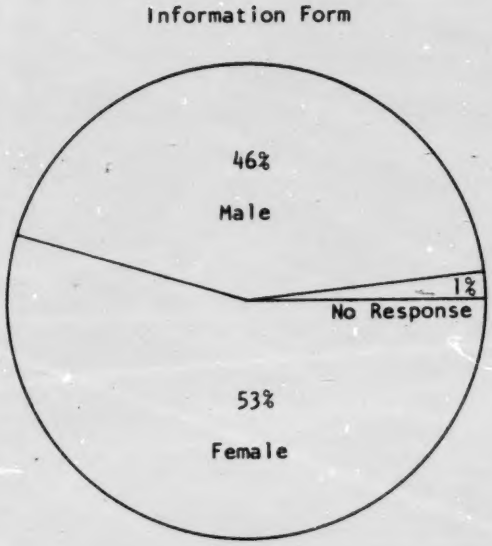
State Board of Education Regulations specify that each school board desiring funds for training O.S. shall submit a proposed training program to the division of elementary and secondary education. A review of the data provided by superintendents (see Figure 3-1) reveal that 42 school districts, 62.6%, have functioning approved O.S. training programs. The length varys from less than one week in 4 districts, up to 3 years in 23 districts. Supervised internship is included in 16 of these programs with the length varying from less than 1 week in 4 programs to more than 21 weeks in 3 programs.

While 62.6% of the superintendents indicated that the O.S. was well trained only 23.8% indicated that they were not well trained and 13.4%

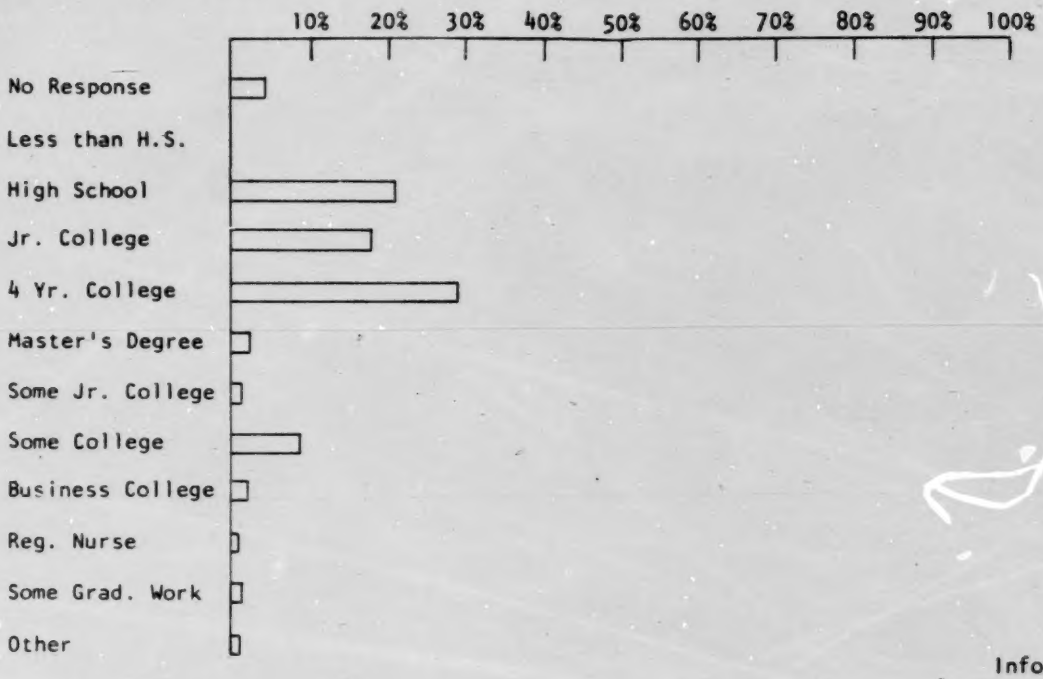
What is your age?



Sex?

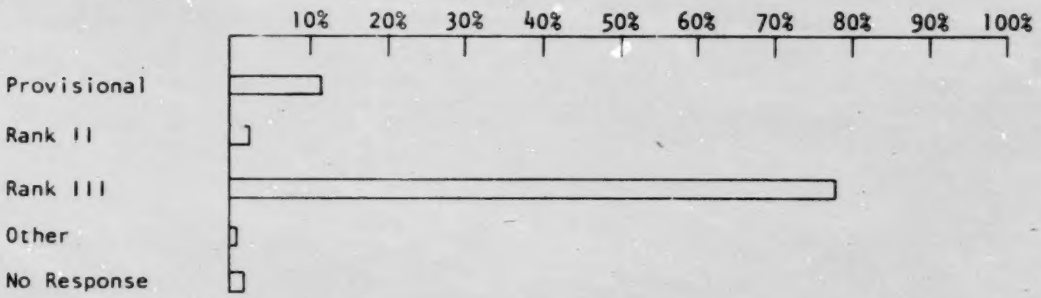


What level of education have you attained?



Information Form

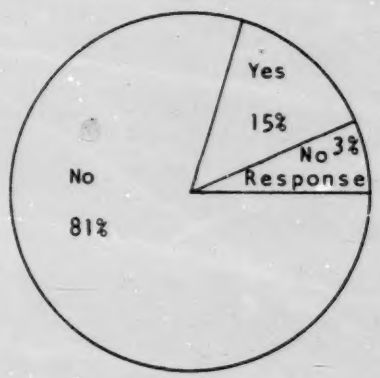
What is your certification rank as an Occupational Specialist?



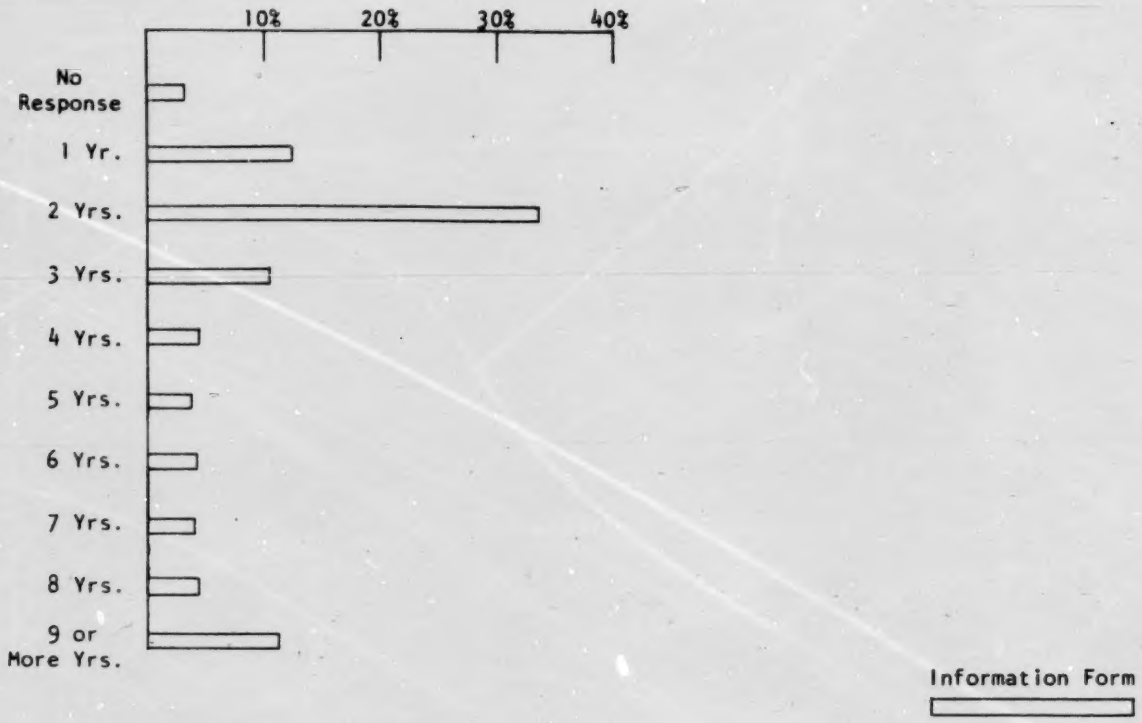
Information Form

Do you have any other Florida certification rank?

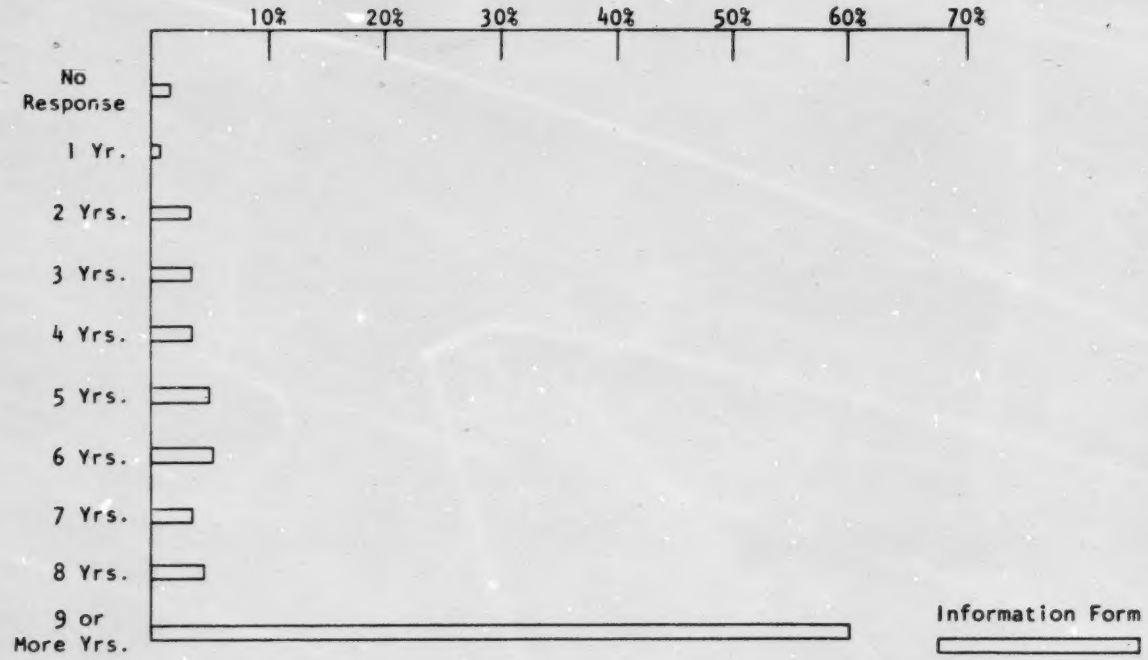
Information Form



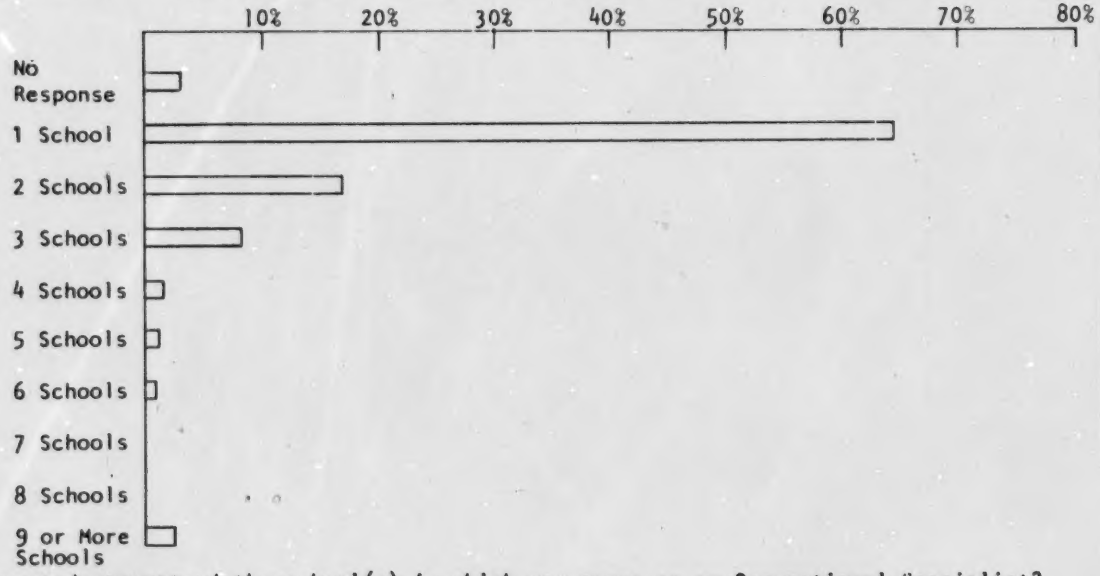
How many years have you worked in the field of education?



How many years have you worked with business, industry or government (in a non-educational area)?

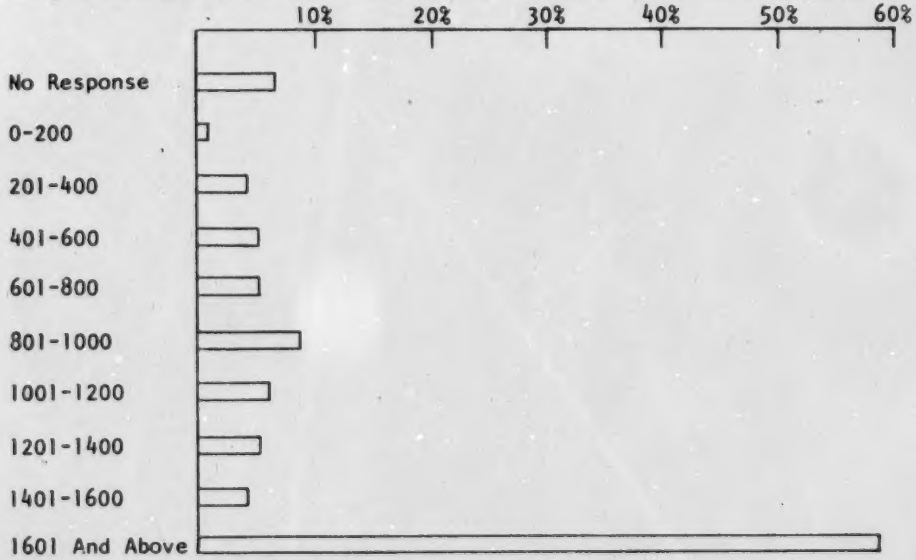


How many school(s) do you serve as an Occupational Specialist?



Information Form:

How many students attend the school(s) in which you serve as an Occupational Specialist?



Information Form:

were undecided or did not respond. In a like manner response from principals, counselors and teachers would indicate the O.S. was adequately trained to perform the job. While 46% of this group responded the O.S. was adequately trained only 26% of the same group responded the O. S. was not adequately trained to perform the job and 28% were undecided, had no basis for making judgment or did not respond to the question (see Figure 3-1 and 3-2).

When presented the question "do you feel that the O.S. is addressing the student correctly about job opportunities?" 71% of the principals, 58% of the counselors and 48% of the teachers responded "yes" while only 10% of the principals, 14% of the counselors and 13% of the teachers responded "no." Within these three groups, 19% of the principals, 28% of the counselors and 39% of the teachers were undecided, had no basis for the decision or did not respond to the question (see Figure 3-2).

When asked if it was fair to the teaching faculty to employ O.S. at the same salary and Florida Certification Rank as classroom teachers the response was not strongly positive or negative. While 38% of the principals, teachers and counselors combined responded "yes," 38% of the same group responded "no" and 24% were undecided, had no information for the decision or did not respond.

From the information presented the O.S. would appear to be adequately trained and adequately qualified to perform the job tasks. The information further indicated that the O.S. did address the students correctly about job opportunities.

FIGURE 3-1

RESPONSE FROM SUPERINTENDENTS RELATIVE

TO TRAINING OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 67
1. Has the O.S. been adequately trained?		
Yes	42	(62.7%)
No	16	(23.9%)
Undecided or no response	9	(13.4%)
2. Does your county have an O.S. training program?		
Yes	42	(62.7%)
No	20	(29.9%)
No response	5	(7.5%)
3. When was the training program submitted for approval?		
1971	10	(14.9%)
1972	19	(28.4%)
1973	6	(9.0%)
1974	5	(7.5%)
No response	27	(40.3%)
4. Length of training program?		
Less than 1 week	4	(6.0%)
1-25 weeks	37	(55.2%)
26-52 weeks	2	(3.0%)
1-3 years	23	(34.3%)

FIGURE 3-1 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM SUPERINTENDENTS RELATIVE

TO TRAINING OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 67
5. Does your training program include supervised internship?		
Yes	16	(23.9%)
No	23	(34.3%)
No response	28	(41.8%
6. Length of the internship in the 16 centers with the internship:		
Less than 1 week	4	(25.0%)
1 to 10 weeks	5	(31.3%)
11 to 20 weeks	4	(25.0%)
21 weeks or more	3	(18.8%)
7. How were the O.S. selected? The most frequent response:		
Advertised	40	(59.7%)
Selected inservice personnel	9	(13.4%)
Chosen by superintendent	4	(5.9%)
Chose certified teachers	3	(4.5%)

FIGURE 3-2

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO TRAINING OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
1. Some school personnel have expressed their disapproval of the hiring of O.S.(s) by the school system because the entry level requirements permit persons to be hired with little or no professional preparation and because they may be paid a salary equivalent to a Rank III bachelor's degree of some teaching faculty. With these facts in mind, please respond to the following questions:				
a. Do you feel that this is fair to the teaching faculty? Yes	37(47.4%)	58(33.1%)	44(37.6%)	139(37.6%)
No	29(37.2%)	75(42.9%)	36(30.8%)	140(37.8%)
Undecided	4(5.1%)	30(17.1%)	17(14.5%)	51(13.8%)
I don't know; no information for decision	6(7.7%)	5(2.9%)	16(13.7%)	27(7.3%)
No response	2(2.6%)	7(4.0%)	4(3.4%)	13(3.5%)
b. Do you feel that the O.S. is adequately trained to perform his or her job? Yes	41(52.6%)	81(46.3%)	49(41.9%)	171(46.2%)
No	17(21.8%)	56(32.0%)	24(20.5%)	97(26.2%)
Undecided	10(12.8%)	24(13.7%)	13(11.1%)	47(12.7%)

FIGURE 3-2 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO TRAINING OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
b. (Continued) I don't know; no basis for information	7(9.0%)	10(5.7%)	27(23.1%)	44(11.9%)
No response	3(3.9%)	4(2.3%)	4(3.4%)	11(3.0%)
c. Do you feel that the O.S. is addressing the student correctly about job opportunities? Yes	55(70.5%)	102(58.3%)	55(47.0%)	212(57.3%)
No	8(10.3%)	24(13.7%)	15(12.8%)	47(12.7%)
Undecided	5(6.4%)	33(18.9%)	13(11.1%)	51(13.8%)
I don't know; no basis for information	8(10.3%)	12(6.9%)	30(25.6%)	50(13.6%)
No response	2(2.6%)	4(2.3%)	4(3.4%)	10(2.7%)

FIGURE 3-3

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO THE TRAINING OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
1. Do you have definite plans to continue your education for further professional advancement?		
Yes	200	(71.2%)
No	17	(6.1%)
Undecided	53	(18.9%)
No response	11	(3.9%)
2. If the answer to #1 is "yes," please indicate what type of school you plan to attend.		
High School	0	(0.0%)
Junior College	25	(8.9%)
4 Year College	65	(23.1%)
Master's Program	59	(21.0%)
4 Year College & Masters	11	(3.9%)
Jr. College & 4 Year College	8	(2.9%)
Inservice Training & Workshops	22	(7.8%)
Post-Graduate or PHD	5	(1.8%)
Courses help to the O.S.	8	(2.9%)
Other	5	(1.8%)
No response	73	(26.0%)

FIGURE 3-3 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO THE TRAINING OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
3. What level of education have you attained?		
Less than high school	0	(0.0%)
high school or equivalent	65	(23.1%)
junior college degree	53	(18.9%)
4-year college degree	87	(31.0%)
Master's degree	8	(2.9%)
Other (please specify)		
4. What is your certification rank as an Occupational Specialist?		
Provisional	40	(14.2%)
Rank II	9	(3.2%)
Rank III	219	(78.0%)
Other (please specify)	4	(1.4%)
5. Do you have any other Florida certification rank?		
Yes	43	(15.3%)
No	229	(81.5%)

FIGURE 3-3 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO THE TRAINING OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N = 281
6. How many years have you worked with business, industry, or government (in a non-educational area)?		
1 Year	3	(1.1%)
2 Years	13	(4.6%)
3 Years	13	(4.6%)
4 Years	13	(4.6%)
5 Years	20	(7.1%)
6 Years	20	(7.1%)
7 Years	11	(3.9%)
8 Years	16	(5.7%)
9 or More Years	166	(59.1%)
No response	6	(2.1%)
7. How many years have you worked in the field of education?		
1 Year	37	(13.2%)
2 Years	99	(35.2%)
3 Years	34	(12.1%)
4 Years	18	(6.4%)
5 Years	11	(3.9%)
6 Years	13	(4.6%)
7 Years	11	(3.9%)
8 Years	13	(4.6%)
9 or More Years	37	(13.2%)
No Response	8	(2.9%)

SECTION IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST AS A FUNCTIONING MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL STAFF

The Florida State Board of Education Regulations allow a school district to be reimbursed for the salary of an Occupational Specialist (O.S.) at a rate not less than that of Rank III bachelor's degree classroom teacher. Even though specified qualification requirements include only high school graduation, 20 years of age and the demonstrated ability to relate to potential school dropouts and their parents the O.S. occupies a position equal to the four year college graduate. With far less formal education required for entry level job positions and destined to work with the student identified as a second class citizen by highly academic teachers and staff, the new O.S. entering the school is likely to experience difficulties being accepted as one of the team members.

One purpose of the study was to formulate an answer to the question, "has the O.S. been accepted as a functioning member of the school staff?" The purpose of this section is to report response from O.S., students and school staff, the principals, counselors and teachers relative to the question.

An analysis of the information collected (see Figure 4-1) indicate that a majority of the school staff favor the O.S. Further, the school staff reported that there was a good relationship and easy communication between the students and the O.S. and when asked about O.S. salary, 11% of the school staff felt that it was more than adequate, 51% felt that it was adequate and 13% felt that it was inadequate.

The students also provided data about the acceptance of the O.S. such as likes by other school staff. While there was no majority of the total student body to indicate that the O.S. was well accepted by the school staff there was no majority of responses to indicate non-acceptance or dislike for the O.S. The majority of the student body indicated that they did not know if there were strong feelings in either direction (see Figure 4-2).

Data collected from O.S. indicate that they differ from school staff on the salary they receive. While 58% of the O.S. felt that their salary was adequate, 35% indicated that it was inadequate and only 1% felt that it was more than adequate (see Figure 4-3).

When asked about office facilities, only 38% of the O.S. reported having a private office with telephone, 32% reported sharing an office and telephone and the remaining 30% reported a variety of office arrangements but with no telephones.

An analysis of the information reported for this study and the performance of the O.S. as reported in Section II would appear that the O.S. has become a functioning member of the school staff and has made a worthy contribution to students even though offices and facilities were limited. The degree of acceptance of the O.S. by other school staff was relatively positive.

When asked the question "who would you suggest to perform the job of the O.S. if the program were discontinued?" 42% of the principals suggested the counselors even though the Florida Legislative body indicate the counselors not qualified to perform the job, 15% of the principals suggested teachers, while 42% of the principals suggested work experience coordinators, Florida State Employment Services and others. Responding to the same question, 59% of the counselors suggested that they perform the counseling and placement function if the O.S. program were discontinued, further, 6% suggested teachers and 13% suggested others such as coop teachers, work experience people and Florida State Employment Service. Four per cent of the counselors expressed resentment toward the O.S. and indicated that this task should not be performed and that the O.S. Program should be discontinued. Twenty-nine per cent of the teachers indicated that the counselors should perform task of the O.S. if the program were discontinued, 13% indicated that the teachers should perform the O.S. tasks and 19% felt that the state employment services work coordinators and others should perform the tasks of the O.S. As a combined group 46% of the principals, teachers and counselors indicated that the counselors should perform the tasks of the O.S. if the O.S. program were discontinued.

FIGURE 4-1

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
1. As you have observed the O.S. working with students, have you found him or her to be friendly, helpful, and generally pleasant?				
Yes	74(94.9%)	166(94.9%)	91(77.8%)	331(89.5%)
No	0(0.0%)	2(1.1%)	2(1.7%)	4(1.1%)
Don't know; no basis for observation	4(5.1%)	5(2.9%)	20(17.1%)	29(7.8%)
No response	0(0.0%)	2(1.1%)	4(3.4%)	6(1.6%)
2. Does the counselor appear to favor the O.S. program?				
Yes	63(80.8%)	NA	NA	NA
No	5(6.4%)	NA	NA	NA
Undecided or mixed feelings	8(10.3%)	NA	NA	NA
I don't know	0(0.0%)	NA	NA	NA
No response	2(2.6%)	NA	NA	NA
3. Do the teachers in your school appear to favor the O.S. Programs?				
Yes	53(68.0%)	101(57.7%)	52(44.4%)	206(55.7%)
No	6(7.7%)	11(6.3%)	10(8.6%)	27(7.3%)
Undecided or mixed feelings	14(18.0%)	33(18.9%)	29(24.8%)	76(20.5%)
I don't know	4(5.1%)	26(14.9%)	22(18.8%)	52(14.1%)
No response	1(1.3%)	4(2.3%)	4(3.4%)	9(2.4%)

FIGURE 4-1 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
4. From your observations, would you say that there is a good relationship between students and the O.S.? For example, do students like him or her? Is there mutual trust? Do they easily communicate with each other?				
Yes	70(89.7%)	159(90.9%)	79(67.5%)	308(83.2%)
No	1(1.3%)	0(0.0%)	5(4.3%)	6(1.6%)
Don't know; no basis for judgment	6(7.7%)	12(6.9%)	26(22.2%)	44(11.9%)
No response	1(1.3%)	4(2.3%)	7(6.0%)	12(3.2%)
5. Is the salary being paid the O.S.:				
More than adequate?	6(7.7%)	19(10.9%)	14(12.0%)	39(10.5%)
Adequate?	50(64.1%)	93(53.1%)	49(41.9%)	192(51.9%)
Inadequate?	11(14.1%)	19(10.9%)	16(13.7%)	46(12.4%)
No response	11(14.1%)	44(25.1%)	38(32.5%)	93(25.1%)
6. If the school counselors are not knowledgeable of job opportunities and the world of work (as has been assumed by the Florida Legislature), who would you suggest to perform the job of the Occupational Specialist if the program were discontinued?				
Counselors	33(42.3%)	103(58.9%)	34(29.1%)	170(46.0%)
Teachers	12(15.4%)	11(6.3%)	15(12.8%)	38(10.3%)

FIGURE 4-1 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

RELATIVE TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	PRINCIPALS N=78	COUNSELORS N=175	TEACHERS N=117	TOTAL N=370
6. (Continued) Others (work experience coordinators, state employment services)	33(42.3%)	23(13.1%)	22(18.8%)	78(21.1%)

FIGURE 4-2

RESPONSE FROM STUDENTS RELATIVE TO

ACCEPTANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	STUDENTS			
	JR. HI.	HI-SCHOOL	VO-TECH	TOTAL
	N=211	N=234	N=103	N=548
1. Does the O.S. help students with homework assignments?				
Never	45(21.3%)	56(23.9%)	28(27.2%)	129(23.5%)
Rarely (once a month)	10(4.7%)	8(3.4%)	5(4.9%)	24(4.4%)
Frequently (once a week)	5(2.4%)	6(2.6%)	4(3.9%)	15(2.7%)
Regularly (every day)	4(1.9%)	3(1.3%)	8(7.8%)	15(2.7%)
Don't know	147(69.7%)	161(68.8%)	58(56.3%)	365(66.6%)
2. Is the O.S. a nice, helpful person?				
Yes	106(50.2%)	100(42.7%)	65(63.1%)	271(49.5%)
No	9(4.3%)	11(4.7%)	2(1.9%)	22(4.0%)
I don't know	96(45.5%)	123(52.6%)	36(35.0%)	255(46.5%)
3. Do you ever go to see your O.S. on your own?				
Yes	47(22.3%)	48(20.5%)	41(39.8%)	136(24.8%)
No	164(77.7%)	186(79.5%)	62(60.2%)	412(75.2%)
4. Do students like the O.S.?				
Yes	80(37.9%)	84(35.9%)	59(57.3%)	223(40.7%)
No	9(4.3%)	11(4.7%)	2(1.9%)	22(4.0%)
I don't know	122(57.8%)	139(59.4%)	42(40.8%)	303(55.3%)

FIGURE 4-2 (Continued)

RESPONSE FROM STUDENTS RELATIVE TO

ACCEPTANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN FLORIDA

QUESTIONS	STUDENTS			
	JR. HI. N=211	HI-SCHOOL N=234	VO-TECH N=103	TOTAL N=548
5. Do teachers in your school like the Occupational Specialist?				
Yes	76(36.0%)	63(26.9%)	56(54.4%)	195(35.6%)
No	5(2.4%)	6(2.6%)	1(1.0%)	12(2.2%)
I don't know	130(61.6%)	165(70.5%)	46(44.7%)	341(62.2%)
6. Does the principal like the Occupational Specialist?				
Yes	70(33.2%)	57(24.4%)	47(45.6%)	174(31.8%)
No	5(2.4%)	8(3.4%)	4(3.9%)	17(3.1%)
I don't know	136(64.5%)	169(72.2%)	52(50.5%)	357(65.2%)
7. Do the counselors in your school like the Occupational Specialist?				
Yes	70(33.2%)	67(28.6%)	51(49.5%)	188(34.3%)
No	6(2.8%)	7(3.0%)	1(1.0%)	14(2.6%)
I don't know	135(64.0%)	160(68.4%)	51(49.5%)	346(63.1%)

FIGURE 4-3

RESPONSE FROM THE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST RELATIVE

TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE

OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIST IN FLORIDA

QUESTION	RESPONSE	N=281
1. Is the salary being paid the Occupational Specialist		
Inadequate	99	(35.2%)
Adequate	164	(58.4%)
More than adequate	3	(1.1%)
2. What type of office facilities are provided for you?		
Own office with telephone	106	(37.7%)
Share office with telephone	90	(32.0%)
Share office without telephone	8	(2.9%)
No office	11	(3.9%)
Own office with no telephone	20	(7.1%)
Room with no phone	12	(4.3%)
Office in Career Center	9	(3.2%)
Office next year	3	(1.1%)
Other	8	(2.9%)
No response	14	(5.0%)
3. What is the position title of your immediate supervisor?		
Counselor	131	(46.6%)
Teacher	0	(0.0%)
Assistant Principal	31	(11.0%)
Other (please specify) Principal	37	(13.2%)
No response	82	(29.2%)